



A PATH FORWARD

Metro's Recovery Task Force

PROGRESS REPORT 3 — AUGUST 10, 2020



Metro



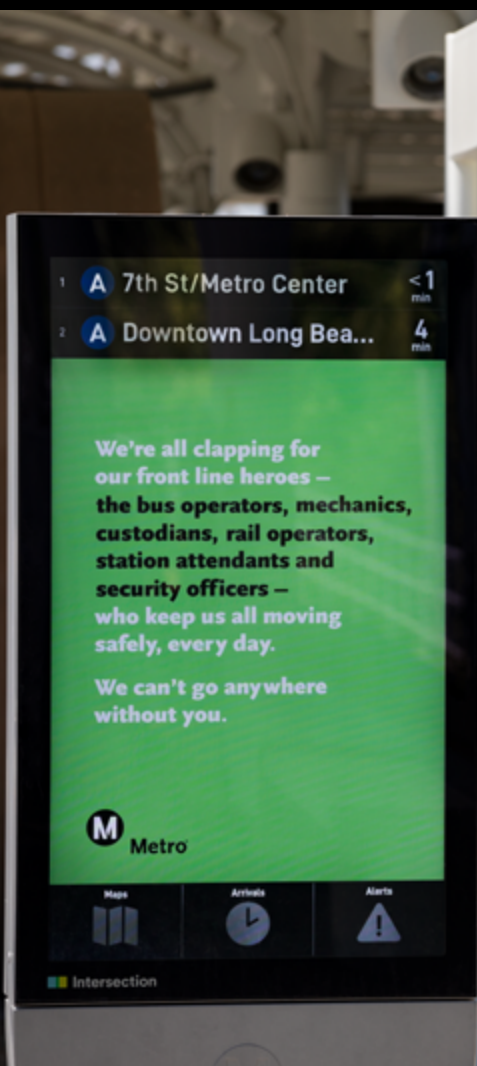
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About the Task Force

The COVID-19 Response Task Force is a staff committee at Metro responsible for providing advice and recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Board of Directors on recovery from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.



Membership

The task force is chaired by the Chief Innovation Officer and staffed by the Office of Extraordinary Innovation and Communications. Membership of the task force consists of Metro staff nominated by SLT members and chosen to secure a balanced membership with diverse experience and perspectives, with a preference for graduates of, or participants in, Metro Leadership Academy, ENO/Max and the Women & Girls Governing Council. The Executive Officers for Equity & Race and Customer Experience are also on the task force.

Joshua Schank, *OEI – Chair*

Aida Berry, *Office of Civil Rights & Inclusion*

Stephanie Burke, *Human Capital & Development*

Peter Carter, *Planning*

Lilian de Loza-Gutierrez, *Communications*

KeAndra Cylear Dodds, *Office of the CEO*

Paula Guevara, *Office of Civil Rights & Inclusion*

Imelda Hernandez, *Systems Security & Law Enforcement*

Nancy Hinojosa, *Risk, Safety & Asset Management*

Kyle Holland, *Finance & Budget*

Rani Narula-Woods, *Operations*

Olivia Nelson-Richard, *Transportation Communications Union*

Melissa Park, *Congestion Reduction*

Heather Repenning, *Program Management*

Heather Severin, *Program Management*

Georgia Sheridan, *Planning*

Fumi Sotozono, *Management Audit Services*

Jessica Spearman, *Vendor/Contract Management*

Quintin Sumabat, *Operations*

Alvin Trotter Jr., *Program Management*

Elezanbee Vue, *Operations*

Aaron Weinstein, *Office of the CEO*

Staffed by

Mark Vallianatos, *OEI*

Emma Huang, *OEI*

John Gordon, *Communications*

Goals and Responsibilities

The task force will recommend a set of actions that Metro can take to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and recover from it. Task force goals and deliverables include:

- 1 Identifying and recommending potential actions that Metro can take to respond to the pandemic; to recover after the pandemic; to help lead an equitable economic recovery for LA County; and to advance mobility without congestion as the 'new normal' after the pandemic.
- 2 Issuing monthly reports to the SLT, CEO and Board on progress towards a recovery plan, including early action items to consider taking.
- 3 Drafting a final recovery report.





What do we mean by recovery?



The mandate of the Recovery Task Force derives from our charter, which identifies four interrelated recovery goals. Walking through these four goals provides an opportunity to consider the scope of the Recovery Task Force in more detail. The scope defines the problems and trends that the task force is examining. It also guides types of ideas and actions that the task force has recommended to date, and will continue to identify and bring forward.

1. The task force's first goal is to help Metro **respond to the pandemic**. By respond, we mean adjust how the agency is operating in order to prioritize the health and safety of Metro customers and staff. To help Metro respond, the Recovery Task Force has been following the latest research on COVID-19 impacts and public health best practices. We have recommended early actions that we hope Metro can implement before our final report, because they are timely steps to advance health and safety. The Recovery Task Force is regularly connecting with and supporting departments and committees within Metro that are making decisions about safety and health. We have also adjusted our recommendations based on the latest data and trends. For example, one of the task force's initial early recommendations was on testing, using and publicizing new cleaning methods. As evidence increased that COVID-19 is primarily spread through the air in enclosed areas, the task force added an additional early action item on air flow to encourage consideration of open windows, safe ventilation and air exchange.

2. The second goal is to help Metro **recover after the pandemic**. Recovery in this context means allowing Metro to get back to business in providing the critical services upon which people rely. This includes ramping up operations and projects, as well as ensuring that improvements that were poised for implementation, like the NextGen Bus Plan, can move forward. The task force has supported the Service Recovery Plan developed by Metro's Operation's Department as a way to bring back service to stay ahead of overcrowding – and to do so in a way that aligns with the NextGen Bus Plan.

3. The third goal is to help lead an **equitable economic recovery for LA County**. By economic recovery we mean aggregate trends like economic output and employment/unemployment levels, and individual and household measures, such as incomes, savings and the ability of residents to afford the basics of life. An *equitable* economic recovery looks beyond total and average numbers to acknowledge that some racial and ethnic groups already had significantly lower incomes and wealth before the pandemic; and that members of these same groups have been more likely to lose their jobs during the crisis or be directly affected by the virus. The task force can help ensure that Metro's contributions to economic recovery lead to greater equity in economic opportunities and outcomes. The pandemic has underscored how important Metro is to sustaining the region's economy. Our services allow many essential workers to get to their jobs.
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In fact, the main way that Metro can contribute to economic recovery is to bring back and improve our transportation services. Metro also contributes to the economy as an employer, purchaser of products and services, and as a funder of capital projects. The Recovery Task Force can help identify ways to encourage Metro's transportation services, employment, contracting, and capital investments in order to contribute to economic recovery and to boost opportunities for groups with the greatest needs. For example, one of the task force's recommendations promotes mask wearing by making it easier for sidewalk vendors to sell masks on and near our stations. This would advance safety and can also increase economic opportunity for the mainly low-income immigrant vendors whose main livelihood selling food was restricted during the pandemic.

4. The Recovery Task Force's fourth and final recovery goal is to **advance mobility without congestion as the 'new normal' after the pandemic**. What is mobility without congestion? We interpret it to align with [Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan](#). Metro's mission is to "provide a world-class transportation system that enhances quality of life for all who live, work and play within LA County." The strategic plan aims to remove mobility barriers, allow swift and easy mobility and provide a variety of high-quality mobility options.

The plan's visionary outcomes show what the results will be if the plan is implemented. The main visionary outcome is to double the share of trips taken on modes other than solo driving, plus more people living close to high-quality mobility options, shorter waits for trips, faster bus speeds and reliable, convenient options to bypass congestion. A silver lining for transportation in LA County during the pandemic is that people are driving less, so we have experienced a rare reduction in congestion on LA streets and freeways. A goal of the Recovery Task Force is therefore to recommend ways that Metro can help improve mobility and keep congestion lower even after the pandemic wanes and the economy recovers. This means that Metro should not return to the exact mix of services, programs, policies and budget allocations that were in place at the start of 2020. We need to keep doing what we do well, but also need to adjust, innovate and improve. A number of the task force's early recommendations are for mobility options that advance dual goals of safe, distanced mobility now, plus more and better options in the future. Our final report will include more recommendations to help bring Metro back in a way that promotes more equitable mobility outcomes than LA County experienced before the pandemic.



Preview of a Recovery Framework

The task force's first [three monthly progress reports](#) have focused on identifying and providing updates on early action items. This reflects the critical importance of helping the agency respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.



The task force has now begun considering how the final report will be structured and what can be included in it. The final report will contain a more comprehensive recovery plan. It will address the four goals described on the previous page. The framework for recovery that the task force is developing takes account of challenges to achieving these goals, as well as opportunities to help reach them.

The challenges include obstacles from before COVID-19:

- > High levels of solo driving and policies that favor drive-alone trips
- > High levels of congestion and slow travel speeds on roads and freeways
- > Rising car ownership and declining ridership on Metro services
- > Lack of direct ability to manage streets to allow faster and more reliable transit
- > Worsening housing and homelessness crises
- > High and rising construction costs for capital projects
- > Inequities in access to opportunity and mobility in both its transportation and economic meaning in LA County

These have been exacerbated by new challenges and risks caused by the pandemic:

- > Concerns over the real or perceived health risks of riding transit
- > Increased inequality due to the disparate negative impacts of the pandemic and economic shutdown
- > A decline in economic activity and, therefore, sales tax revenue, leading to budget gaps and postponement of some projects and programs

Fortunately, Metro had a number of key assets and opportunities in place before COVID-19:

- > Transportation services like bus, rail and bike share providing mobility options across much of LA County
- > Permanent sources of local funding thanks to tax measures approved by voters

- > Transit system expansion underway with projects in construction and planning
- > A strategic plan focused on improving and expanding mobility for those who need it most

Some opportunities have accompanied the overall tragedy of the pandemic:

- > A significant reduction in traffic and congestion
- > Greater levels of telecommuting and greater interest in active transportation
- > Proof that Metro provides essential services for essential workers
- > The potential for a reset in travel patterns when the pandemic wanes

In order to navigate the complex trends we are facing and to advance our recovery goals, Metro requires a recovery plan that is ambitious yet achievable, with specific targets and flexible strategies. The task force intends to include recommendations that fit into three scales or levels.

1. **Early action recommendations** are time-sensitive recommendations that represent an urgent response to the pandemic or that need to be started as soon as possible. Since the task force has already been working on early actions, they will include updates on progress-to-date and fairly detailed implementation strategies.
2. **Core recommendations** are ideas that do not necessarily require early action, but are important to help Metro achieve its recovery goals. The task force has not been working on implementation plans for these ideas, so recommendations in this category will require additional action to flesh out and implement.
3. **'Transformative' recommendations** are recommendations that the task force believes are necessary to give Metro the chance to succeed in accomplishing its recovery goals and its broader mission. They are transformational because they can potentially have dramatic positive effects on mobility, equity and environmental outcomes. They can transform the playing field on which Metro operates and make it easier for the agency to accomplish many other critical goals. The task force understands that making big change is difficult, and will encourage focus by putting forward only a limited number of transformative recommendations.



Task Force Progress to Date



Metro

Welcome Aboard
Bienvenidos



The task force was launched in late April 2020. It has taken the following steps in its first three months of work:

- > SLT members nominated staff to the task force, and ratified the list of members. Once it was constituted, task force staff and members drafted and signed a charter identifying goals, structure, roles and timelines.
- > Task force participants quickly identified more than 100 potential recommendations that can help Metro achieve its recovery goals. These ideas were drawn from programs and policies being implemented by Metro in response to COVID-19; from conversations with Metro staff on additional recovery options; and from research on recovery best practices underway around the world.
- > The task force established an equity subcommittee led by task force member KeAndra Cylear Dodds, the agency's Executive Officer for Equity & Race. The equity subcommittee is using a new equity tool to perform a rapid equity assessment of potential recommendations.

The purpose of this equity analysis is to help identify which actions can help vulnerable customers and communities; reduce disparities; and mitigate any unintended harms. See the rapid equity tool below.

- > The task force chose an initial list of 12 early action recommendations in May 2020, based on alignment with Vision 2028 and equity assessment, as well as on expected recovery benefits, timeliness and financial impacts. The Chair presented these 12 ideas to the SLT and to the Policy and Planning Committee of the Board of Directors. The task force published its [first report](#) with these 12 early actions on June 1, 2020. In June, the task force recommended an additional six early actions. The task force published its [second report](#) with these additional six recommendations on July 8, 2020.

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The task force is using a **rapid equity assessment tool** to advance equity and reduce disparities in Metro's recovery planning and actions. In analyzing potential recovery recommendations, the tool leads the task force to consider the following questions:

- 1 Will the decision being made impact any equity groups?
- 2 Could this present an equity opportunity?
- 3 Who will benefit or be burdened by this decision?
- 4 How will the decision prioritize the needs of historically marginalized communities and others most impacted by the crisis?
- 5 What are strategies to mitigate any potential negative impacts of this decision?
- 6 Summarize any changes to the decision based on equity assessment.

- > Task force members divided into small working groups to begin developing more detailed implementation plans for these early action items in discussion with responsible departments. These working groups also developed cost recommendations for the second set of early action items.
 - > To inform its deliberations, the task force heard presentations on internal resources and programs that could contribute to recovery. These included presentations on:
 - equity assessments
 - results from a survey of 1900 Metro customers surveyed in June
 - a summary of interviews Aaron Weinstein (the agency's Executive Officer for Customer Experience) and KeAndra Cylear Dodd conducted with Metro bus operators to get their perception of Metro customer experiences during the COVID pandemic
 - a research memo summarizing the pandemic's impacts on Metro and LA County and lessons from other disasters
 - the agency's unsolicited proposal process; and the Measure M Visionary Seed Fund
 - > The task force chair met regularly with the head of Metro's Incident Management Team to exchange updates.
 - > The task force developed an external and internal outreach plan to share its work with – and gather recovery ideas from – the public, stakeholders and Metro employees. Committees and organizations that have been briefed by the task force include:
 - Metro Service Councils
 - Metro's Policy Advisory Committee
 - Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - General Managers and Streets and Freeways Sub-Committee of the various municipal operators within LA County, BizFed and Valley Industry & Commerce Association
- The task force will continue to meet with other groups during the coming weeks.



Virtual Public Town Hall July 9, 2020

- > **Audience: members of the public**
- > **Over 300 participants logged on**
- > **Two simultaneous streams in English and Spanish**
- > **Approximately 50 comments received**

The task force shared its goals and outlined the initial 18 early action items. Members of the public were invited to comment on these items and to suggest additional problems or solutions that the task force could consider.

The approximately 50 comments that we received cover a range of issues. A sample of these were:

- > How is Metro ensuring social distancing and setting maximum vehicle loads?
- > Metro should permanently include equity in decision making.
- > Can Metro provide more public restrooms on the system?
- > How can Metro make it easier for seniors to refill TAP cards without touching machines?
- > How are fares being collected during the pandemic?
- > Can Metro reduce pricing of parking at Metro stations during the pandemic?
- > Is there a process to receive unsolicited proposals related to recovery?
- > What first and last mile options are available for customers who are unable to ride bikes?
- > Metro should consider increasing the number of people in a car needed to use HOV lanes.
- > How is Metro planning to enhance bus stops?

Virtual Internal Town Hall July 23, 2020

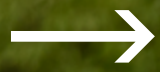
- > **Audience: Metro internal employees**
- > **Over 1,390 employees attended:**
 - 1,177 watched by livestream
 - 216 tuned in via webcam
- > **Variety of comments received**

Staff signed on to hear about the task force and to ask questions about its work and to recommend ideas for the task force to consider.

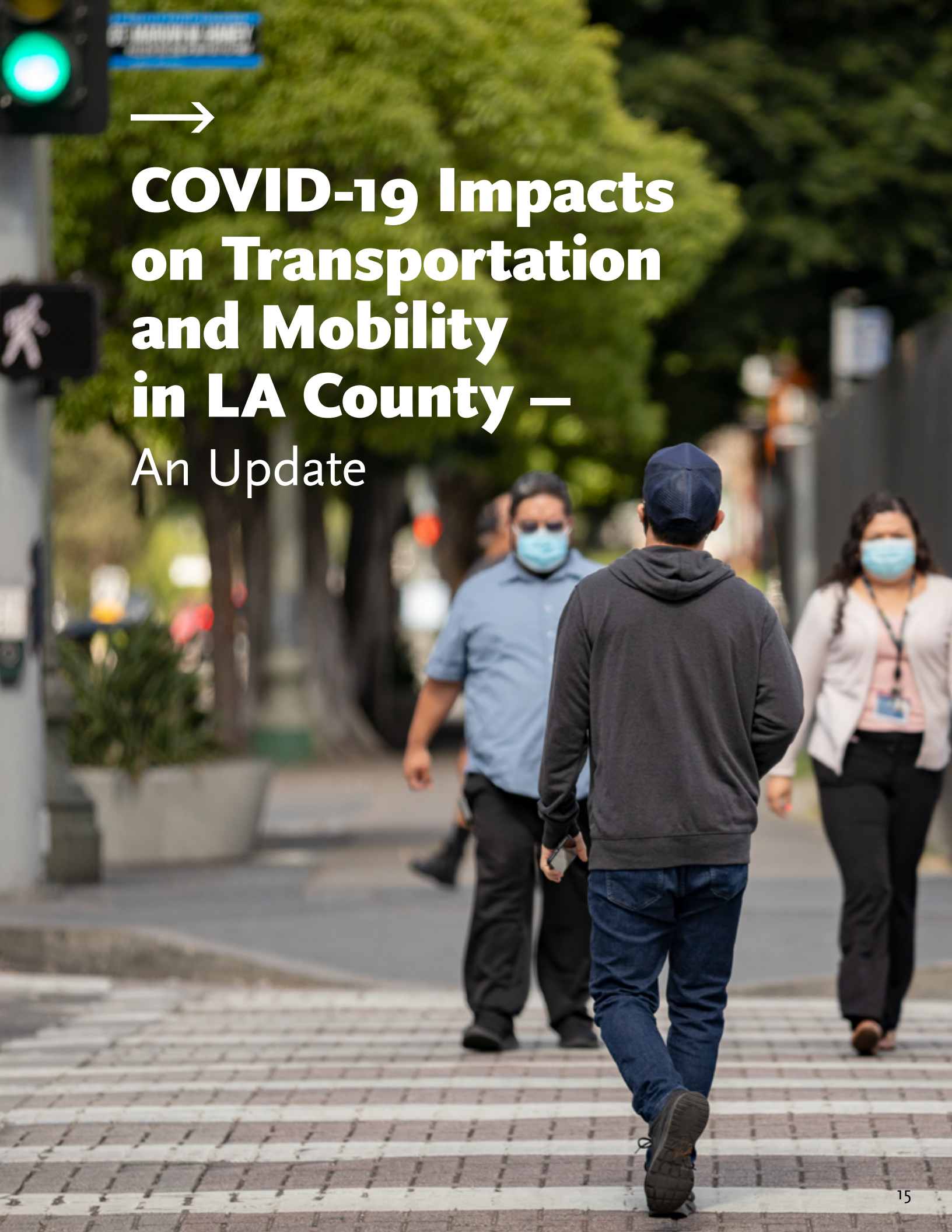
Comments and questions touched on a variety of topics, some of which include child care and education, active transportation, ridership, congestion pricing, contactless and mobile payments, safety, cleaning, etc.

Among the comments from staff were:

- > Does authorizing more telecommuting after the pandemic require Metro Board action?
- > Metro should release a TAP app with different languages commonly spoken in LA County.
- > Doesn't encouraging more bike riding and telecommuting reduce transit use?
- > Can Metro's planning process have a less top-down approach?
- > Metro should partner with LAUSD to build out Wi-Fi access points to allow all students to take part in distance learning.
- > Can the Traffic Reduction Study be accelerated?
- > Can Metro let riders determine when their 7- or 30-day passes start and end?
- > Is Metro helping cities repurpose street space for walking, bikes and outdoor dining?
- > Is the task force learning from how other transit systems are responding?
- > Can Metro offer incentives to help encourage riders to come back?
- > Will Metro commit to continuing enhanced clean-up of trash and elevators even after the pandemic?
- > Will Metro allow greater Flex scheduling for staff?



COVID-19 Impacts on Transportation and Mobility in LA County – An Update



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a rapidly-evolving crisis. The task force regularly monitors data and follows developments on COVID-19 impacts on transportation and mobility in LA County. The following trends have been observed:

The COVID-19 infection rate continues to increase in LA County.

- > The number of cases and deaths from COVID-19 continues to increase, with a record-high day of 157 deaths on a single day on July 23, 2020.¹ Hospitalizations are climbing and the statewide positivity rate continues to increase. The number of cases in California is expected to double every 39.9 days. California has overtaken New York and now has the nation's highest case count.²
- > As of July 26, 2020, LA County had 174,017 confirmed cases, with 1,674 new cases. There have been 4,360 deaths in the county.³ The Department of Public Health is reporting delays in data due to delays in the state electronic lab reporting system. The number of cases is expected to increase in the coming days once the data becomes available.⁴
- > Within Metro's own workforce, as of July 24, 2020, there have been 227 confirmed cases (145 employees, 76 contractors, five vendors).⁵

Travel patterns continue to change.

- > Changes in travel patterns have been unique region to region, suggesting that transportation policy decisions should consider localized data.

- > As of July 31, 2020, 30% of LA County residents are estimated to be staying at home. Since the start of the first Safer At Home order in March 2020, on average daily person miles travelled has steadily increased. It hit a daily low of 15 miles/person on April 15th, but as of July 31st, daily PMT was 28.8.⁶
- > LADOT has found that after the Safer At Home orders in March, people in poorer communities reduced their vehicle miles travelled (VMT) less than those in more affluent neighborhoods. Residents in majority Black and Latino areas decreased their VMT less than all other areas.⁷
- > Metro Services for July 2020:
 - Ridership numbers from July 17, 2020, indicate Metro is carrying about 561,947 boardings a day. Field observations show that the majority of customers are wearing face masks/coverings when riding on the system.
 - Metro's Park & Ride function has been slowly recovering proportional to corridor ridership recovery.
 - Metro Bike Share saw an average 36% decline, which is consistent from June 2020.
 - Metro ExpressLanes volumes were approximately 47% of their normal levels.
 - Metro's Mobility on Demand partnership with Via expects to surpass 11,000 rides in July, nearly 90% of the pre-COVID highest month of ridership.

¹See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-23/california-records-most-coronavirus-deaths-in-a-day-as-fatalities-pass-8-000>

²See <https://www.latimes.com/projects/california-coronavirus-cases-tracking-outbreak/>

³See <https://www.latimes.com/projects/california-coronavirus-cases-tracking-outbreak/los-angeles-county/>

⁴See <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/phcommon/public/media/mediapubdetail.cfm?unit=media&ou=ph&prog=media&cur=cur&prid=2533&row=25&start=1>

⁵See <https://www.metro.net/about/about-metro/metro-tracks-covid-19-cases/>

⁶See <https://data.covid.umd.edu/>

⁷See <https://cities-today.com/mobility-data-foundational-for-fairer-transport-systems/> and <https://www.govtech.com/fs/data/COVID-19-Nearly-Killed-the-Economy-It-Didn't-Kill-Traffic.html>

Inequities are worsening.

- > In California, essential workers, those in nursing homes and prisons, and people of color are more likely to become infected or die from COVID-19.⁸
- > Workers in retail, manufacturing, agriculture and logistics, in farming communities and urban and suburban areas, are bearing the brunt of outbreaks.⁹
- > Emerging data show Filipino Americans, who account for about one-quarter of Asian Americans in California, account for at least 35% of COVID-19 deaths amongst the state's Asian population.¹⁰
- > Latino residents of LA County are contracting the coronavirus at a much faster pace than other racial and ethnic groups, and are twice as likely to have contracted the virus than white residents, and they also have had a steeper increase in their number of cases.¹¹

The unemployment rate is tied to changes in Safer at Home policy.

- > The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in LA County decreased over the month to 19.4% in June 2020, from a revised 21.1% in May 2020, and was above the rate of 4.4% one year ago. This is compared to the California seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 14.9% in June 2020, 16.4% in May 2020 and 4.0% a year ago in June 2019. The comparable estimates for the nation were 11.1% in June 2020, 13.3% in May 2020 and 3.7% a year ago.¹²
- > Non-farm employment in LA County increased by 147,000 in June 2020. This is the second consecutive month of growth following an addition of 36,300 jobs in May. The combined total of 183,300 job additions made up for about a quarter (25.6%) of the 716,300 job losses over March and April.¹³

Education and child care continue to be severely impacted.

- > In July, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that schools will remain closed in 32 counties on the state's COVID-19 monitoring list, including LA County. LA Unified School District leaders announced distance learning for all students returning for the coming year.¹⁴
- > This will continue to challenge families, especially working parents and essential workers, to balance child care duties with work obligations. Employer-sponsored parental support varies widely from sector to sector, if provided at all.
- > Low-income communities, many disproportionately comprising Black and Latino students, will face major challenges with distance learning. Even long before COVID-19 struck, California struggled with educational inequality. A study conducted by LA Unified School District in July found that more than 50,000 Black and Latino middle and high school students in Los Angeles did not regularly participate in the school system's main platform for virtual classrooms after campuses closed in March. English learners, students with disabilities, homeless students and those in the foster-care system had lower rates of online participation.¹⁵ School closures and distance-learning will exacerbate those gaps.

Masks do more than protect others.

- > New research on face coverings shows that they don't just cut down on risk of infecting others, but the benefits can also extend to the mask wearer. A study in Lancet found the risk of infection to mask wearers is decreased by 65%.¹⁶
- > Another study found that mask wearing can also lessen the severity of symptoms if transmission does occur, due to mask wearers taking in fewer coronavirus particles.¹⁷

⁸See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-24/coronavirus-hospitalizations-for-children-younger-adults-dramatically-worsen-in-l-a-county>

⁹See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-29/california-wont-conquer-the-coronavirus-and-fully-reopen-until-it-can-protect-essential-workers>

¹⁰See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-21/filipino-americans-dying-covid>

¹¹See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-10/l-a-countys-latino-residents-contracting-coronavirus-faster-than-other-groups>

¹²See [https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/la\\$pd.pdf](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/la$pd.pdf)

¹³See [https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/la\\$pd.pdf](https://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/la$pd.pdf)

¹⁴See <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-17/california-imposes-statewide-coronavirus-standard-for-reopening-schools>

¹⁵See <http://laschoolboard.org/sites/default/files/IAU%20Report%202020%200707%20-%20Student%20Engagement%20Online%20During%20Closures.pdf>

¹⁶See [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext)

¹⁷See <https://ucsf.app.box.com/s/blvolkpszomydzd82rjks4wyleagto36>



Early Action Recommendations

The task force is recommending early actions that the agency can take in advance of the final recovery report. These are time-sensitive measures that will be more effective if they are implemented soon. Some of the early action items relate to immediate response measures to address health and safety priorities. Others are steps that can help Metro prepare for and position itself for recovery.



The task force isn't working in a vacuum. Its members, drawn from diverse departments, are conduits to actions that Metro is already taking to respond to the pandemic and to prepare for recovery. In fact, many of the action items recommended by the task force are meant to reinforce and support steps that are ongoing within the agency.

Recommendations were chosen based on a few criteria, including a rapid equity assessment; the timeliness of an action; anticipated mobility or public health benefits; and a goal for the overall package of recommendations to be revenue neutral or revenue positive.

To help organize the 18 early action items that the task force has recommended so far, they are presented in three categories that correspond to different timelines for recovery. These categories are: (1) Respond and prepare, which is a short-term timeframe and the period of recovery that we are currently in; (2) Relaunch, which is a medium-term timeframe that Metro will be entering as Safer At Home orders are loosened; and (3) Recovery, which is a medium to long term phase in which activities come back to normal – and hopefully to a 'new normal' of better mobility.

These time periods should not be considered to be entirely distinct; they overlap to some extent and shift as conditions of the pandemic change, as shown in the graphic below.

For this third progress report, we have added update sections to six recommendations that were identified in June.

Each recommendation consists of:

- > Summary of the recommendation
- > Justification on how it can help Metro recover
- > Summary of equity impacts
- > Relevant goals from Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan
- > Cost estimate for the item
- > Update on what has been done on the recommendation (for May action items; June action items will be updated in future progress reports)
- > Best practices, which are examples from other organizations

It is important to keep in mind that the task force is a recommending committee, not a decision-making body. Decisions on whether and how to implement these ideas will be made by a combination of the Board of Directors, the SLT and responsible departments. The task force will track decisions and steps taken on these recommended early action items and will continue to include updates in future progress reports.

RESPOND AND PREPARE

RELAUNCH

RECOVERY



Phase One:

Respond and Prepare





1. Rider-led Recovery

Recommendation:

Survey Metro customers on their current transportation patterns and modes, future transportation plans and overall customer experience.

Justification:

Help identify how quickly ridership may recover and gain insights on customer experience priorities, including what makes customers feel safe to use our services.

Equity:

Surveys can determine how different racial, ethnic and income groups have experienced transportation during the pandemic and how they plan to travel in the future.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information on the transit system.
- 3.3 Conduct genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Cost Estimate:

Costs were negligible. Effort was entirely in-house.

Update:

An e-mail-based survey of a cross-section of Metro riders was launched on May 29 and ran through June 24. Metro received 1,861 completed responses. The responses will help guide task force recommendations. See the [second report](#) for a summary of survey results.

Best Practices:

Denver RTD conducted a survey of nearly 2,700 people that showed the public remains apprehensive about engaging in social activities amid the spread of the coronavirus, including riding RTD services. The majority of those who had not used transit in the past 30 days said they will take a wait-and-see approach to the pandemic before riding again.¹⁸

The Port Authority of Allegheny County surveyed riders before restrictions were gradually eased. A series of questions asks riders whether they are aware of safety precautions the agency has taken, whether they expect to return to work soon and how often they expect to use transit.¹⁹

¹⁸ See metro-magazine.com/management-operations/news/738409/public-cautious-about-using-transit-rtd-survey-shows

¹⁹ See post-gazette.com/news/transportation/2020/05/13/Port-Authority-survey-increase-service-Campos-Allegheny-County-COVID-19/stories/202005130135

2. Safer Streets for All

Recommendation:

Work with the Board to authorize Cities that received 2020 Open Street Grants to repurpose some or all of funding on safe/slow street programs; and explore ways to encourage other LA County jurisdictions to implement safe/slow streets.

Justification:

Create more space for safe, distanced walking and biking for transportation and recreation; showcase how road space can be repurposed for more multi-modal transportation.

Equity:

This offers an equity opportunity to serve low-income communities, which tend to have more overcrowding, less access to parks and open space, higher levels of vehicle collisions and injuries, and fewer bike lanes. To ensure marginalized communities are engaged in a solution, Metro should encourage cities to partner with CBOs for outreach and education.

Cost Estimate:

This is a no-cost program since grants have already been awarded.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system and reduce roadway collisions and injuries.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.2 Catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize communities where these investments are made.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan (including improving multi-modal transportation options).
- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievements of goals and initiatives prioritized in the Vision 2028 Plan.

Update:

Metro's Board of Directors passed Motion 40 implementing this idea at its May 2020 meeting. (Board motion 2020-0375). Staff has received several inquiries. Four cities have indicated that they are interested in submitting a proposal. The remaining grantees have decided to postpone their Open Street events rather than repurposing funds.



Best Practices:

Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) launched a “Slow Streets” initiative designating 74 miles of neighborhood streets to bikes, pedestrians, wheelchair users and local vehicles only across the city. Oakland utilized streets identified in its 2019 bike plan update, and relied on a “light-touch” approach that leveraged volunteers and existing in-house resources.²⁰

Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles and dozens of other cities have also enacted some amount of Slow Streets/ Safe Streets/Open Streets.

²⁰ See oaklandca.gov/news/2020/city-of-oakland-announces-oakland-slow-streets-program-starting-saturday-to-enable-safer-walking-cycling

3. Create Safe Environments

Recommendation:

Test, adopt and publicize new cleaning methods, such as UV, Ozone and autonomous robotic floor cleaners, while also increasing publicity of existing cleaning practices, especially through videos.

Justification:

Testing and implementing new cleaning will advance health and safety for riders and staff; publicizing current and new cleaning practices will help inform and reassure riders currently using the system and those who will be making transportation decisions as Safer At Home orders are modified. Using innovative cleaning technologies will maximize productivity and offer revenue generating opportunities. For example, utilizing robotic floor cleaners allows maintenance crews additional time to clean other station areas while the autonomous robots clean and sweep floors; thereby, increasing productivity.

Equity:

Enhanced cleaning will benefit Metro's riders who are primarily low-income and people of color, as well as riders with underlying health conditions that make them more at risk of COVID-19. Look for opportunities for small and DBE businesses in any new cleaning contracts and study side effects of new cleaning methods to protect sensitive riders/staff.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Cost Estimate:

Our Annual Maintenance Program budget for FY2021 for Bus Maintenance, Rail Fleet Services, and Maintenance & Engineering totals approximately \$250 million. Metro is working on implementing additional end-of-line cleaning on Bus and Rail vehicles, buses, and stations. This includes more cleaning equipment to conduct deep cleaning and maintenance of rail terminals and stations and potential contracted cleaning services. The estimated cost for enhanced cleaning is an additional \$2.2 million per quarter. Metro also recently ordered 30 portable UV light tripods at a cost of \$168k for testing on our buses, rail vehicles, and facilities.

Update:

Metro Operations is conducting research and engineering work on additional methods to disinfect infrastructure. Metro will be piloting the use of UV lights in August/September 2020 after devices become available and training is complete. The agency is also investigating other cleaning methods, including electrostatic foggers, autonomous floor cleaning robots and copper solutions. Additionally, Metro is researching how to equip buses and trains with hand sanitizer dispensers. This is important because while cleaning can be done on vehicles that are out of service, surfaces can become contaminated by riders with COVID-19 during revenue service, so hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizer are encouraged.

Best Practices:

NY MTA has launched a \$1M UV light pilot program to kill COVID-19 on buses and trains and at stations.²¹

Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) authorities are investigating effectiveness of smaller UV equipment that is easier to get on train cars.²²

Pittsburgh International Airport is utilizing autonomous robots with Ultraviolet Light Technology.²³

²⁰ See <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/20/us/new-york-transit-uv-light-trnd/index.html>

²¹ See <https://www.govtech.com/fs/transportation/Austrian-Transit-Offers-Ridership-Lessons-to-US-Agencies.html>

²² See <https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/05/05/2027486/0/en/Pittsburgh-International-Airport-to-Become-first-U-S-Airport-to-Utilize-Autonomous-Robots-with-Ultraviolet-Light-Technology.html>

4. Masks for Our Riders

Recommendation:

Explore ways to distribute masks to riders, to help the recently-introduced face covering requirement succeed. Distribution of masks can focus on hot spots identified by bus operators, riders and public health data.

Justification:

Distributing masks can increase compliance with face covering requirements, enhancing health benefits. It can also help avoid conflicts and uncertainty if customers try to ride without masks.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity through focused distribution in areas with high concentrations of COVID-19 cases, particularly where residents lack resources to purchase masks, as well as through the use of culturally competent education to implement the new face covering requirement, rather than law enforcement, which might target marginalized communities.

Cost Estimate:

Approximately \$25,000 a week.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update:

Metro distributed masks throughout the month of June and part of July 2020 at 12 stations chosen based on high ridership. Close to 50,000 masks have been distributed to date. Metro Street Teams will resume distributing masks during the 3rd week of August. Metro will deploy 11 street teams to ride the system and hand out free masks to all riders. Additionally, Metro staff has identified eight major stops that it will send street teams to distribute masks. These stops were selected based on overlaying Metro's system map with equity-focused communities, high traffic stops and areas in LA County with high rates of COVID-19 cases.



Best Practices:

As supply chains have improved, and with new CDC guidance, several transit agencies across the nation have begun distributing free masks to customers. Some are relying on ambassadors to distribute, and others are installing mask dispensers on buses. These agencies include SEPTA, CapMetro, Greensboro Transit, Montgomery County's Ride On Bus System, Detroit DOT, RTC Rashoe, etc.²⁴

²⁴ See <https://whyy.org/articles/septa-is-giving-masks-to-riders-after-backlash-to-face-covering-mandate/>;
<https://whyy.org/articles/septa-is-giving-masks-to-riders-after-backlash-to-face-covering-mandate/>;
<https://spectrumlocalnews.com/tx/austin/news/2020/04/18/capmetro-to-distribute-free-masks-to-riders>;
https://www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/greensboro-transit-agency-offers-free-cloth-masks-to-riders-on-thursday/article_f8fb9b3c-15ae-5e4e-8fo8-7c97f2obo868.html;
<https://www.silive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/mta-rolls-out-ppe-vending-machines-at-some-subway-stations.html>;
https://www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/greensboro-transit-agency-offers-free-cloth-masks-to-riders-on-thursday/article_f8fb9b3c-15ae-5e4e-8fo8-7c97f2obo868.html;
<https://www.silive.com/coronavirus/2020/07/mta-rolls-out-ppe-vending-machines-at-some-subway-stations.html>

5. Allow Mask Vending

Recommendation:

Supplement mask distribution by licensing vendors to sell masks and potentially personal hand sanitizer at some of our stations. Metro should still continue mask distribution based on equity and need. The agency should establish a vending program with a quick process to license vendors at some stations where we are not distributing free masks.

Justification:

There is increasing evidence that public transit is fairly safe to ride if there is widespread use of face coverings by riders and operators as shown in Hong Kong, etc. (See [Report](#), page 10). Allowing one mask vendor per station at some Metro stations where the agency is not distributing free masks will allow riders who forgot to bring a mask to purchase one before riding. This program will also help mask vendors, some of whom were previously selling food before sidewalk food vending was banned due to COVID-19.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity by supporting street vendors who tend to be low-income, immigrants and people of color. These demographics continually to be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, especially those who have not been allowed to go back to work at their old locations. In organizing a mask vending program, Metro should take account of lessons learned from the MacArthur Park Community Market and engage street vendor leaders.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.5 Expand opportunities for small and emerging businesses.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Cost Estimate:

Depending on the program design, we may be able to use the existing vending program structure and staffing at no additional cost.

Update:

Staff are considering ways to allow mask vending on stations or other Metro property. Based on lessons from Metro's ongoing vending program and a special multi-vendor project at the Westlake MacArthur Park Station, as well as conversations with organizations that work with sidewalk vendors, staff aim for a quick, reduced-fee permit process.

Best Practices:

Many cities have waived permit processes or created more flexible rules to allow restaurants and other retail establishments to operate outside.

6. Contactless Payment

Recommendation:

Rapidly introduce a contactless, visual ticket purchase and payment option in Metro's new official app, *Transit*, as an option to accompany TAP card payment. To smooth out demand, make off-peak service free or discounted for a limited, promotional period when there is a rise in ridership and crowding on Metro bus and rail. Note: this is not intended to change enforcement practices.

Justification:

A non-contact way to pay will reduce physical risks and can help reassure customers. An additional way to pay may also increase payments during a period in which fares are not being enforced. A limited-time promotion with free or reduced non-peak fares can help encourage customer to download the *Transit* app and can help reduce crowding during peak times.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity by providing new, safer ways to pay. These modes will be accessible to all people with smart phones, regardless income, race, or other demographics, who can use the *Transit* app. It has been determined that this recommendation should not create any burdens at this time.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Cost Estimate:

Revenue positive. Revenue would come from fare purchases that would not otherwise be paid (because many bus riders are not paying for rides due to rear boarding during the pandemic).

Update:

Metro has started discussions with *Transit* on picking a third-party payment partner to allow this contactless payment function. Launch of contactless payment is on hold briefly, while Metro determines contractual and legal obligations with the current payment contractor.



Best Practices:

At least nine transit agencies have accelerated or started the process of introducing mobile ticketing in response to COVID-19. Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority, for example, is already integrated with *Transit*, and moved up the launch of mobile ticketing to May.

7. Virtual Connection

Recommendation:

Metro should refresh, share and follow protocols for online public meetings. This should include establishing accounts with software platforms with features needed to ensure inclusive and equitable community engagement, such as closed-captioning in multiple languages, chat, hand raising, polling, break out rooms, and moderation tools. To ensure that stakeholders who may not have internet access can participate, Metro will deploy staff or vehicles and work with local partners, to provide free Wi-Fi hotspots and potentially laptops/tablets to help community members during online meetings.

Justification:

With public meetings having moved completely online due to the pandemic, Metro should ensure that all staff and projects hosting online external meetings are following best practices and agency protocols. Adding new software platforms to the agency's set of online meeting tools will be beneficial if they bring useful accessibility features. Not all LA county residents have reliable online access, so bringing hotspots to the community can in certain cases provide more opportunity for participation.

Equity:

The combination of a virtual platform with translation, accessibility features and potential deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots supports better access for marginalized and vulnerable communities, including those who do not have internet, those who speak various languages and those who are hearing impaired.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 3.3 Genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 plan.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more efficient agency.

Cost Estimate:

\$3200 for ten Zoom licenses. Each Wi-Fi hotspot costs \$50 and can be set up at different meetings. If set up by a staff member, the cost would be time for that staffer; if the Wi-Fi was set up on a bus it would require a full shift and cost approximately \$1400. Using a bus would only make sense if there was no other method or location to provide a Wi-Fi hotspot.

Update:

Metro's Communications department has put forward a proposal to acquire Zoom licenses.

Best Practices:

Sacramento Regional Transit is providing free Wi-Fi hotspots.²⁵

Washington's Pierce Transit is launching a pilot program to provide free mobile Wi-Fi hot spots for students who do not have reliable Internet access but still need to complete remote school assignments during Washington's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order.²⁶

²⁵ See <https://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-transit-buses-free-wi-fi-hot-spots/32371876#>

²⁶ See <https://www.metro-magazine.com/10112745/pierce-transit-using-buses-to-create-wi-fi-hot-spots-for-students>

8. Fresh Air, Safe Travel

Recommendation:

Assess options to improve air flow and filtering to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission. This could include keeping bus windows open and enhanced cleaning and filtering of HVAC systems on vehicles, in stations and buildings.

Justification:

Evidence increasingly suggests that transmission of COVID-19 is through airborne droplets that occurs during sustained, close contact of people when people cough or talk loudly in enclosed spaces. Improving air flow and filtering in vehicles and buildings should help reduce transmission.

Equity:

This will help protect Metro riders, who are mainly low-income persons of color.

Cost Estimate:

This is a new issue so more research is needed. There are likely associated costs to upgrade HVAC systems and filters and add new capabilities.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update:

Some Metro buses have fixed windows and those with operable windows do not lock open. Therefore, it is up to passengers whether windows would be kept open or closed. Staff are considering posting signs explaining the safety benefits of partially open windows. Metro is also exploring electrostatic cleaning of rail HVACs and increasing the fresh air intake for bus HVAC.



Best Practices:

East Japan Railway encourages passengers to open windows and educates them about air flow from ventilation systems, opening and closing of doors at stops, and air flow from windows to provide customers with reassurance. They also ask customers to refrain from talking while riding.²⁷

Bus drivers in Jerusalem have been instructed by the Transportation Ministry to keep windows open to allow for an exchange of air.²⁸

APTA recommends that windows be opened slightly while revenue vehicles are in use and to maximize ventilation rates on HVAC systems.²⁹

²⁶ Akiko Ito, JREast Representative to APTA; Director, East Japan Railway Company. Via APTA.

²⁷ See <https://hamodia.com/2020/03/09/coronavirus-bus-rules-windows-open-no-standing-stay-away-driver/>

²⁸ See https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19-Transit-Guide-FINAL_04132020.pdf



Phase Two: Relaunch



9. Matching Service with Demand

Recommendation:

Restore more frequent transit service to stay ahead of demand, and retain rear-door boarding as an option.

Justification:

Restoring more frequent bus and rail service in stages and retaining rear door boarding on buses as an option, can make transit competitive, and can allow physical distancing and reduce overcrowding. There is evidence that service cuts during past crises led to long term reductions in ridership.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity by prioritizing more frequent service and retaining rear door boarding on lines currently experiencing overcrowding, which can help essential workers and our primarily low-income, riders of color through mobility gains and health protection.

Cost Estimate:

Increasing service will have costs, but the initial phases will still consist of fewer Revenue Service Hours (RSH) than pre-pandemic operations. RSH was at 7.0 million annualized level during December 2019. Post-COVID, the April 2020 RSH was at 5.0M annualized. Phase 1 of service recovery is 5.5M RSH annualized.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system.
- 1.3 Develop simplified, sustainable, and comprehensive pricing policies to support the provision of equitable, affordable, and high-quality transportation services.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information (including safety and comfort) on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 5.6 Foster and maintain a strong safety culture.

Update:

Metro entered Phase 1 of its four-stage service recovery plan on June 21, 2020, and added 7-8% in hours to bus service offerings, which included adding service to 95 lines (over half of all Metro lines) and increased frequency on certain select Tier 1 and Tier 2 bus lines.³⁰

Best Practices:

Pittsburg Port Authority is assigning longer, articulated buses to trips with the highest ridership to allow riders to maintain a safe distance from each other. It is also maintaining off-peak service.³¹

Boston's MBTA has yet to dramatically reduce service despite ridership declines in the range of 75-90%. The MBTA is also adding frequency on busier bus routes to ensure riders and transit workers can maintain safe physical distance on board. Routes where the MBTA is reducing service include the weekday express routes, where most of the riders are now working from home.³²

³¹ See <https://thesource.metro.net/2020/06/18/service-changes-begin-this-sunday-june-21-with-more-trips-on-95-bus-lines/>

³² See post-gazette.com/news/transportation/2020/04/07/Port-Authority-nonessential-riders-COVID-19-bigger-buses-pittsburgh/stories/202004070119



10. Better Bike Share

Recommendation:

Study options to enhance the Metro Bike Share program, with goals of more locations (especially equity-focused communities) and more use. Two options to study are:

- > Rebid contract to a third party operator or develop a business partnership to manage the program under a cost-effective or neutral configuration.
- > Bring Metro Bike Share operations and maintenance in-house to be performed by Metro staff.

Justification:

During COVID-19, Metro Bike Share has seen a lower reduction in use than Metro bus, rail and parking, suggesting that there is interest in bike share as a physically-distanced transportation option. Many cities around the world are promoting biking as an alternative to driving during and after the pandemic. Other bike share systems in the region are struggling, providing an opportunity to reexamine bike share in LA County.

Equity:

Improving bike share can enhance equity if more bikes are available in areas where low-income residents and marginalized communities live and work. This improved service should be accompanied by safety improvements to reduce collisions and injuries, which tend to be higher in those neighborhoods. Study should examine locations, cost and payment options and messaging/promotion to diverse communities.

Cost Estimate:

The cost estimate will be determined as part of the study, which is being conducted in-house on staff time.



Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.2 Catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize communities where these investments are made.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan (including improving multi-modal transportation options).
- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievements of goals and initiatives prioritized in this Vision 2028 Plan.

Update:

Metro's Planning department is managing the revisioning of MBS study. As part of the study, staff has also released an Request for Information seeking a cost-effective and expandable bike share program for the region.

Best Practices:

Capital Bike Share in the Washington D.C. region has made rides of up to 30 minutes free for essential workers during the pandemic.³³

³³ See capitalbikeshare.com/blog/essential-workers-program

11. More Biking

Recommendation:

Promote the quick roll-out of more bike infrastructure and bikes. This could include partnering with cities on strategies for rapid deployment of bike improvements; fully funding Metro Active Transportation Cycle 1; accelerate Measure M regional bike capital projects; and developing and launching a pilot to distribute bicycles.

Justification:

Encouraging more cycling in Metro's service area can help prevent overcrowding on transit during a time when fewer riders are allowed on each bus and train. It can also help avoid a surge in driving when Safer At Home orders are lifted, contributing to Metro's visionary strategic plan outcome of fewer single occupancy vehicle trips.

Equity:

In supporting bike programs, Metro should learn from existing pilots, research and community recommendations related to community outreach, over-policing and racial profiling when it comes to installing active transportation improvements in neighborhoods. We also recommend community education to ensure safe riding, and the potential to donate unclaimed bikes collected on our system and at stations to offer bicycles to communities of high need.

Cost Estimate:

MAT Cycle 1 and capital projects would draw from existing funding. Bike donation program is estimated at \$120,000 to develop and launch.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Improve connections to provide seamless journeys.
- 1.2 Improve safety on the transit system and reduce roadway collisions and injuries.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.

Update:

Metro collects 400-500 bicycles per month left on the Metro system and on Metro property. The current Metro procedure dictates that unclaimed bicycles are to be sold at auction. Staff has developed the "Adopt-a-Bike" program for the Board to consider in August 2020. The program would allow unclaimed bicycles to be offered free of charge to LA County residents and the unhoused community who are in need of a bicycle.

Best Practices:

Paris has plans to create 650 km (over 400 miles) of bike lanes, 50 km (30 miles) that were rapidly installed almost overnight. Mayor Hidalgo has recently announced that these 50 km bike lanes will become permanent, which will improve traffic flow and cycling connectivity.³⁴ Paris is also subsidizing around \$550 for citizens to purchase electric bikes and 50 euros towards bike repairs. Public bike rentals are seeing record demand.

England is reallocating public space to cyclists by widening pavements and creating cycle and bus-only corridors. The government is investing \$310 million toward this effort.³⁵

Milan created 35 km of new paths for cyclists and pedestrians, and the Italian government introduced a 70% subsidy for buying bikes.³⁶

³⁴ See <http://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20200701-paris-temporary-bike-lanes-to-be-come-permanent-after-hidalgo-re-election-mayor-green-pollution-cars>

^{35,36} See <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/business/paris-bicycles-commute-coronavirus.html>

12. Working from Home

Recommendation:

Update Metro telecommute policy to allow more staff to telecommute – even after the pandemic; and engage major employers, agencies and other stakeholders to expand telecommuting and implement staggered work hours where feasible.

Justification:

Telecommuting can help avoid a surge in single occupancy vehicle trips and congestion when more businesses open. It can also reduce crowding and related COVID-19 spread in offices, and reduce costs of leases and office supplies.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity by expanding job opportunities for people with disabilities, and workers who can work from home while caring for children and the elderly or sick. Marginalized communities tend to be less represented amongst workers that can work from home, so employers should track the demographic details of telecommuters to understand who benefits and if there are unintended consequences.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.3 Manage transportation demand in a fair and equitable manner.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 4.2 Drive mobility agendas, discussions, and policies at the state, regional and national levels.
- 5.4 Apply prudent commercial business practices to create a more effective agency.

Cost Estimate:

Employee training to maximize effectiveness of telecommuting: approximately \$30,000. Savings from reduced need for office space and supplies could range from \$1.8 million to \$15 million.

Update:

Staff are working on a new telecommute policy. These recommendations are based partly on findings from a survey on telecommuting designed by Metro's OEI and Duke University, as well as on telecommute practices adopted by Metro departments during the pandemic.

Best Practices:

The U.S. federal government, the nation's largest employer, has issued new guidance on liberalizing telework and has urged other agencies to maximize telework flexibilities.³⁷

Large private employers, including Twitter, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, Google, Apple, Airbnb, Lyft, Chevron, Square, The Washington Post, The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times have either encouraged or mandated employees to telecommute as a result of the outbreak, and some have announced that options for remote work will be made permanent.³⁸

Twitter and Square have announced that employees have the option of working from home indefinitely.³⁹

Facebook has announced plans to shift to a remote workforce over the next decade, with 45,000 employees expected to work from home.⁴⁰

³⁷ See brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/17/covid-19-makes-the-benefits-of-telework-obvious/

³⁸ See latimes.com/business/story/2020-03-12/amazon-google-workers-work-from-home-coronavirus

³⁹ See <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2020-06-29/how-teleworking-may-accelerate-the-shift-away-from-big-cities>

⁴⁰ See <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/articles/2020-06-29/how-teleworking-may-accelerate-the-shift-away-from-big-cities>



13. Faster Buses

Recommendation:

Partner with local jurisdictions to accelerate implementation of bus-only lanes and other speed and reliability measures in areas that Operations has identified as past congestion hot spots. Pursue consistent and equitable enforcement of bus-only lanes to realize the mobility benefits of existing and future lanes.

Justification:

The current period of lighter than usual vehicle traffic is a chance to implement more bus lanes with fewer immediate conflicts with traffic and parking. Bus-only lanes will allow greater speed and reliability, helping keep buses competitive with single occupancy vehicles (SOV). Faster travel can also contribute to more frequency and less crowding.

Equity:

This offers an equity opportunity by prioritizing bus lanes on routes used by essential workers, who are primarily low-income, people of color and those that connect equity-focused communities. To allow input from and to get information to ESL populations and riders without smart phones, staff can streamline outreach, rapidly introduce lanes and survey riders for feedback.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.

Cost Estimate:

Planning and installation of lanes and priority measures are an existing work program.

Update:

LADOT, in collaboration with Metro, has installed bus lanes on 5th street and 6th street in downtown Los Angeles. Protected bike lanes will also be installed on portions of these streets. A Metro-City of LA working group continues to analyze potential prioritization measures for other corridors.

Best Practices:

MBTA is considering adding more dedicated bus lanes to speed up travel to meet expected demand as ridership slowly returns and congestion returns. MBTA believes that dedicated bus-only lanes will allow buses to move faster, allowing the buses to make more trips with people safely spread out on the buses.⁴¹

⁴¹ See [wbur.org/bostonmix/2020/05/11/mbta-reopening-service-plan](https://www.wbur.org/bostonmix/2020/05/11/mbta-reopening-service-plan)

14. “We’re here for you.”

Recommendation:

Launch a communication campaign with multiple goals as Safer At Home orders are relaxed, including:

- > boost brand and ridership
- > encourage use of non-SOV services
- > encourage safe use of services
- > convey equity and that everyone is welcome

Justification:

A communications campaign is an opportunity to address and inform riders and the public about how Metro is bringing back more service, how riders can travel safely, and to refresh Metro’s brand in the context of all of the major changes and events of 2020.

Equity:

This could provide an equity opportunity if the campaign messaging and outreach is focused on targeting and hearing from historically marginalized/underserved communities. The campaign should acknowledge those who continued using Metro services for essential trips. Messaging should also reflect input from riders gathered through customer surveys.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.3 Commit to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Cost Estimate:

\$500,000

Update:

Campaign has been developed and funded and will be launched soon.



Best Practices:

NY MTA has launched a “Welcome Back” PSA Campaign as New York reopens. A public service announcement that reminds customers they must wear a face covering when riding public transportation was played across 22 radio stations in the five borough area, in English and in Spanish.⁴²

CTA has launched a new ridership information dashboard to help customers travel smarter and more safely. The dashboard will provide a bus crowding report that shows available capacity of each route is. CTA is also posting new signs and stickers to encourage use of masks and social distancing.⁴³

⁴² See <http://www.mta.info/press-release/mta-headquarters/mta-launches-%E2%80%99welcome-back%E2%80%99-psa-campaign-new-york-reopens>

⁴³ See <https://www.masstransitmag.com/technology/miscellaneous/press-release/21142380/chicago-transit-authority-cta-cta-launches-new-ridership-information-dashboard-customer-awareness-campaign>

15. Customer Ambassadors

Recommendation:

Deploy non-security staff at stations as customer service agents and ambassadors to encourage safe riding (mask usage, distancing, etc.). The design of this program and roles for ambassadors can draw from recommendations from Metro Leadership Academy teams and their capstone projects; from customer survey results; and from public conversations and Metro Board motions on how to improve security on Metro.

Justification:

Expanding the number of non-security staff who can help and interact with riders can advance three goals. It can help riders use services safely. It can provide better customer service in general and address specific concerns identified through customer surveys. And using more non-security staff can also address concerns on disparities in policing.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity through utilizing non-law enforcement to ensure that Black, Latinx and other riders who are not comfortable with law enforcement, feel safe approaching and listening to the customer service agents. Agents that speak various languages, are trained on cultural sensitivity and instructed to focus on education will maximize benefits for marginalized communities.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 2.1 Improve security.
- 2.2 Improve legibility, ease of use, and trip information on the transit system.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.3 Commit to genuine public and community engagement to achieve better mobility outcomes for the people of LA County.

Cost Estimate:

Annual cost estimates from the leadership academy proposals for staff, equipment and training vary depending on the source and number of staff, as well as equipment and training needs:

- > \$55,000 for 25 repurposed FTEs
- > \$740,000 for 25 part-time staff
- > \$7.4 million for 50 new FTEs

Update:

Staff have compiled information from Metro Leadership Academy research on this concept and are also considering how this recommendation aligns with recently adopted Board motions, including Board Motion 37 on considering community approach models to law enforcement.

Best Practices:

Phoenix's Valley Metro has implemented an ambassador program successfully utilizing "Customer Experience Coordinators" who engage with riders, assist them however possible as well as to support system safety, ensure station cleanliness and, ultimately, contribute to an overall positive experience for customers.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ See <https://www.valleymetro.org/news/customer-experience-coordinators-welcome-riders>



16. New Mobility for the Way Forward

Recommendation:

Pilot and expand alternative services following new models, such as the MicroTransit and Mobility on Demand contracts. This may include partnerships with public, private and community operators for complimentary programming.

Justification:

To improve mobility in the region and supplement the Metro network, piloting new and alternative services can be cost-effective and offer new learning on non-SOV options.

Equity:

As with Metro's on-demand pilots, this recommendation can and will prioritize equity-focused communities and people with challenges accessing either traditional transit or private services.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys; explore opportunities for expanding access to shared, demand-responsive transportation options for everyone.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.

Update:

A request for information for low- or no- cost new mobility partnerships was released on August 7, 2020.



Best Practices:

LA Metro's on-demand services have effectively adapted and adjusted service models to accommodate essential trips for customers who need to access services, such as grocery stores, pharmacies and medical centers.⁴⁵

Portland DOT has temporarily waived e-scooter daily fees in exchange for Spin, reducing the cost of a ride by about 50%. Healthcare workers can apply online for free, unlimited 30-minute Spin rentals and a helmet.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See thesource.metro.net/2020/03/25/metros-mobility-on-demand-service-now-running-point-to-point-trips-within-service-zones/

⁴⁶ See www.week.com/bikes/2020/04/07/the-portland-bureau-of-transportation-is-slashing-fees-for-biketown-and-e-scooter-rides/



Phase Three:

Recover



17. Reimagining Projects

Recommendation:

Improve major capital projects based on criteria such as enhancing mobility and ridership, equity and Title VI compliance, and health and economic development. Projects can be examined and improved within the parameters of funding measure ordinances.

Justification:

Budget challenges, the economic and job benefits of capital construction, and the opportunity for a new normal of mobility without congestion provide an opportunity to help projects proceed on schedule and maximize their recovery impacts.

Equity:

As projects are planned and built, equity analysis should be used to maximize the benefits to and avoid harm to vulnerable populations. Analysis should include equity-focused communities and also consider impacts to Small Business Enterprise, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise Programs.

Cost Estimate:

The initial cost is for staff time to consider how recovery criteria can help improve projects.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 1.1 Target infrastructure and service investments towards those with the greatest mobility needs.
- 1.1 Expand the transportation system as responsibly and quickly as possible.
- 1.2 Invest in a world-class bus system that is reliable, convenient, and attractive to more users for more trips.
- 1.2 Improve connectivity to provide seamless journeys.
- 3.1 Leverage its transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.
- 5.1 Leverage funding and staff resources to accelerate the achievement of goals and initiatives prioritized in the Vision 2028 Plan.
- 5.2 Exercise good public policy judgment and sound fiscal stewardship.

Update:

The Recovery Task Force prepared an evaluation framework that could help inform decision-making on capital projects within the parameters of funding measure ordinances.

Best Practices:

King County Metro, an agency with a similarly large capital infrastructure program, has also been negatively impacted by tax revenue shortfalls. KCM has projected a 30-40% reduction in their Capital Improvement Program. To tackle this, KCM developed criteria and is using a newly created Mobility Framework, an equity focused policy tool, to re-evaluate their capital program.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See <https://www.theurbanist.org/2020/06/23/deeper-transit-cuts-loom-as-metro-faces-serious-financial-constraints-in-2021-and-2022/> and KCM's "Update on Metro's COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Regional Transit Committee and Mobility & Environment Committee" dated June 17, 2020

18. Homes for All

Recommendation:

Expand social service resources and partnerships, including on-site services, to increase the ability to connect unhoused riders on the Metro system with services and housing.

Justification:

The presence of people taking non-essential trips prevents social distancing, threatens the public health of all riders and makes some feel uncomfortable. Research shows that enforcement is not effective in addressing homelessness. Transit agencies cannot solve the problem of homelessness alone, but with the right policies, partnerships and programs, they can create a safer and more comfortable environment for all transit users. Additionally, helping unhoused riders find housing and services contributes to Metro's strategic plan goal 3.4 of helping solve homelessness.

Equity:

This presents an equity opportunity by helping unhoused people find housing and services, and allows essential riders to socially distance and reduce the public health risks.

Vision 2028 Goals:

- 2.1 Improve security.
- 2.3 Improve customer satisfaction at all customer touch points.
- 3.4 Play a strong leadership role in efforts to address homelessness in LA County.
- 4.1 Work with partners to build trust and make decisions that support the goals of the Vision 2028 Plan.

Cost Estimate:

The recent new partnerships were no-cost relationships. Substantially expanding outreach would have costs; for benchmarking, the current main service contract is \$5 million per year. The exploration of use of Metro property is in an early stage.

Update:

Metro is continuing to help place homeless riders in partnership with service providers. The agency also added two new service provider partners and is exploring use of Metro properties for housing and/or safe overnight parking, which includes research on cost-effective housing models and partnerships with community-based organizations.





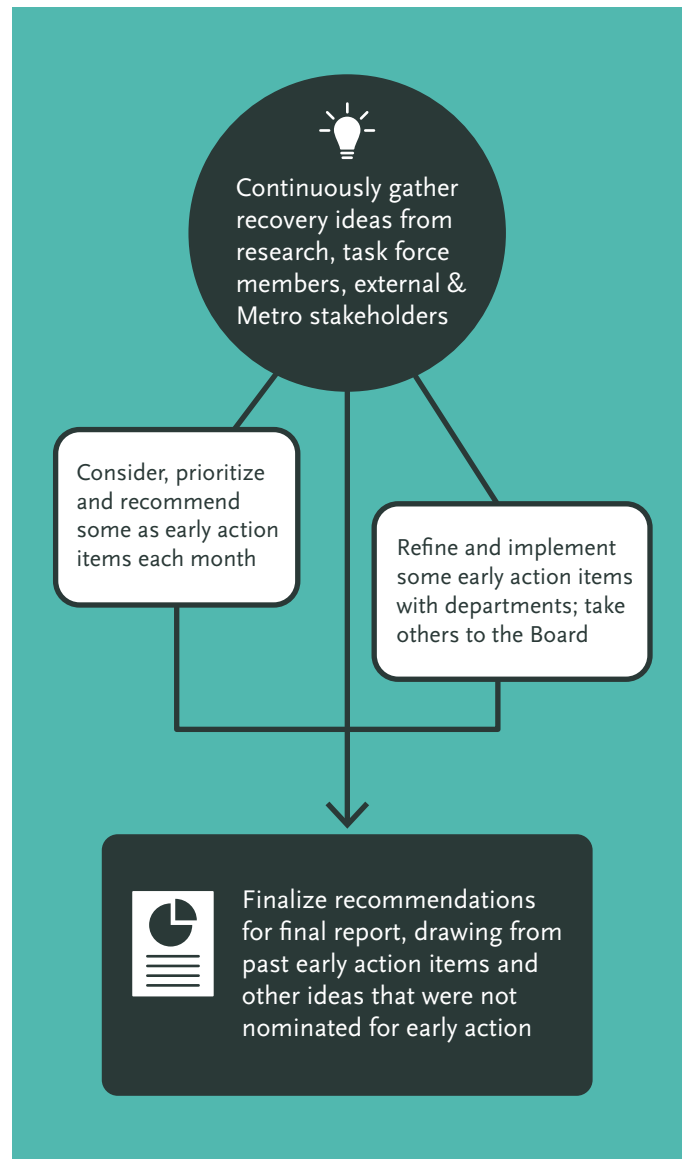
Work Plan/Next Steps

The COVID-19 Recovery Task Force was established to develop a recovery plan and to recommend early action items. Decision makers in Metro, including the Board of Directors, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and CEO, will determine whether, how and when to implement recovery ideas.

To provide the best possible advice to Metro leaders, representatives of the task force will regularly update SLT and the Board on its progress. The task force will conduct outreach to the public and stakeholders to share recommendations and seek ideas that can contribute to the recovery plan.

The task force reserves the potential to bring forward early action items each month (May through September 2020). Some of these action items can be implemented by relevant departments. Others will require Board action, which can be initiated by the recommendations from the task force or by motions from Board members.

The task force's final report will bring together prior early action items along with other important, but less time-sensitive, recovery recommendations. The release of the report will provide another opportunity for Metro to make decisions and take actions. The task force intends to release the final report at the end of September 2020.



Contact Us



For additional information, to ask questions or provide comments, please use the following contact tools:



COVID1grecovery@metro.net



metro.net/recovery